

Radio Star by Collie Parkillo

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Summary: Eddie had always known Richie would be a star.
RichieEddie.

Radio Star

Eddie had always known Richie would be a star. Not because he had a face for it, Richie was no looker with his big glasses and uneven teeth. But even so, there was a sort of charm to him. And he scribbled his name on top of his test papers like he was signing an autograph and walked through doorways like he was accepting an award. And his voice. Not any of the fakes, the honest to god voice of Richie Tozier was that of a celebrity who knew he was destined for big things, the way some people knew when it would rain.

Eddie's finger hovered over the button to turn off the radio. His mother-although she was practically his wife, sickening as the thought was-could come in any time now and tell him to shut that thing off. And he'd turn it off, of course.

"And as we approach 1:00, we reach my favorite hour of the day! Do you all know what time it is?" Rich 'Records' Tozier paused from the radio like a kids show character asking its audience a question. "It's Requests with Rich! Call now to hear your name on the air and get a song of your choice with it!"

Eddie had never listened to the pop station. His mother scorned them and he'd never really liked music much anyways. But suddenly, feeling out of his mind, he reached for the dusty, relatively untouched phone. He had to hear Richie say his name. He had no doubt that it was him, but...The number Richie-Rich-had given was almost all 7's. He punched it in and almost hoped nobody would pick up.

Records Tozier's voice was in one of his ears from the phone and in the other from the radio. "Hello, hello? What's your name and where are you from?"

"Eddie. Eddie from Maine." He felt a weird sort of embarrassment saying it.

Eddie could have sworn the radio star faltered, he could hear his breath hitch in his throat from the other end of the line. It's really him, Eddie thought, his heart thumping. It's Richie. He knew what

Richie was thinking, that there are a lot of Eddies in the world and probably a great many in Maine. There'd even been at least two more in Derry. "Alrightey, Eds, what'll it be?"

For a moment Eddie's heart rose in his throat and seemed to get stuck. What he said next came out of his mouth like an automatic light switch turning on.

"Don't call me Eds."

God, his voice. His voice was deeper and older but it was still Richie Tozier's voice, still the voice of Beep-Beep Richie who'd pulled his ear and wrapped his arm around him and coo-ed that name while being close enough to kiss his cheek. Eddie had often wondered if he had the gall to do that as a child. He had a sudden, wild urge to see Richie's face again. He felt as if he might die if he didn't. There was silence on the radio.

"We don't have all day, Rich," somebody said from the back of Records Tozier's recording studio. So Richie laughed. It was the same laugh he'd uttered int the Derry sewers. Rich, Records, Richie, Trashmouth; it didn't matter what he was called, he was the same. He laughed in the face of danger.

"Okay, sourpuss Eddie from Maine, what song do you want to hear?"

He barely knew any music. Eddie found himself contemplating why the hell he'd done this in the first place. "What's your favorite song?" Of course he knew the answer to that one. Anything by Buddy Holly, because the late singer was a kid with big thick-frame glasses and buck teeth like Richie himself.

"Asking the DJ what song he wants to play. Props to you, Eddie from Maine. Alright, folks, here's Buddy Holly with 'That'll Be The Day,' one of my old favorites for Eddie from Maine. Tune in next 1:00 for another Requests with Rich!" Eddie shut the phone off, and the song started to play from the Kaspbraks' decrepit radio.

"Shut that racket off," demanded Sonia Kaspbrak from the doorway.

"Just this one song, Ma," he said, taking that patient flat tone with

her.

"Okay, Eddie. But I hear those radio waves can get into your head and mess with your brain."

She was right. It had gotten into his head and it was messing with his brain. Eddie would probably never get Richie Tozier out of his head.

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Transcribed from a notebook I wrote in while without internet service. I always liked the movie idea of Eddie living with his mother better than his wife who just randomly disappears for the whole book. But I prefer the book idea of radio star Richie. Some of both, I guess.